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THE DREAMER

BY M. E. CROCKER

If in the greenwood of a dream
I sit as still
As still may be, and hold my breath
And listen, till

Soft rustlings of a leaf I hear,
A whispering bough;
Catch a swift, guarded glance that darts
From a branch—now

If in that greenwood wild and sweet
I stay so still
As if a breath would wreck the world,
If I wait, till

I hear a soft, soft sound that seems
Scarce sound, but more
The thinking of a bird that first
Is murmuring lore

Half-way remembered by his throat—
Catching a note
Before he flings to melody,
Be-starred, remote—

There in that woodland, while I stay
Unmoving, come,
If I am grown into the moss,
Things that were dumb.

Songs of remembered, unchanged dreams
Float close to me;
Souls that were hid slip out from flowers,
Leap from each tree.

But when I move to snatch, to trap
A song, a soul—
With the first finger's-breadth I stir,
Lost is the whole!

Ashford

A CHRISTMAS CITY OF THE OLD SOUTH

BY WINIFRED KIRKLAND

THE only way to visit old Salem of the old South is with a child's heart for luggage. Otherwise this old town in the middle of North Carolina may lie before your eyes actual enough, with its old streets, its old houses, its old Square, its old Home Church as its inmost core, and Salem may welcome you with the gentle, unobtrusive courtesy peculiarly its own; but unless you have learned the wisdom that knows how to put away grown-up things, you cannot really enter the Christmas city.

In Salem, of all places I have ever seen, it is easiest to drop from one's shoulders the crippling pack of maturity and become once again a little child stepping along a Christmas road. Of all places it is easiest in Salem to forget the jangle of faiths and of no-faiths that have deadened our ears, to slip away from the clangour of an age proud and fevered as ancient Rome, and to listen to the confidence of old carols ringing along moonlit dreamy streets, mysterious with the black of magnolia and of boxwood, or to hear floating down from the church belfry high up under the stars the silver melody of the ancient horns which, better than any other instrument, express the soul of the Moravian church. A most musical religion it must seem to every visitor who yields his spirit to the spirit of Moravian Salem. Not only the church liturgy but also the everyday life of the community is keyed to old tunes that date back, some of them, to the Bohemia of five centuries ago, and were familiar in Moravian households in the days when John Huss was martyred for the beauty of his faith.

There is a spell on southern Salem, the spell not of a dead past but of a living one, constantly revitalised, so that, as one walks these uneven red brick pavements, one is haunted by memories of long past Christmases, thoughts of those far times when in secrecy and fear the Hidden Seed kept its feast of candles and of

anthems, thoughts of happier festivals in Saxony where young Count Zinzendorf offered the heretics the refuge city of Herrnhut, thoughts of brave long ago love feasts right here, when a tiny, intrepid band of colonists sang its Christmas chorales in the midst of endless miles of wilderness, while wolves nosed and howled at the cabin door. Along with these Moravian memories come thronging recollections of one's own childhood Christmases in all their unforgotten wizardry, so that here in Christmas Salem I seem to be walking again the midnight aisle which leads through a great wood of fir trees looming black against high stars. Just as at five years old, I am aware again of mystery and danger and bewilderment lurking far off in the forest; but along the Christmas roadway there is no fear, only joy and magic, for it lies straight as a shaft of silver through the black wood, and along it troops of youngsters go dancing onward. At the instant that the children pass, each dark, bordering fir tree becomes bright with tinsel and candles, and along the spicy twigs gay little bells stir and tinkle. From time to time there come snatches of happy chants echoed among the tall dim trunks. Since the wayfarers are children, they know that the soft, unearthly radiance upon the road before them is the long beam from a star not yet seen because it hangs so low above a stable cave, and they know, too, that their silver path is leading all child feet toward that star. Small difference for children between that spirit light of Bethlehem and the merry twinkle of Christmas tree candles. For them, readily enough, their own carol singing mingles with the voices of herald angels, and even Santa Claus himself, all ruddy and kind, may steal to the stable door and gaze in on a Divine Baby. Even so are Christmas faith and Christmas fancy interwoven in old Salem, where white headed men and women still have their Christmas trees, and still with their own hands construct beneath the green boughs the wonderful Christmas "putzes"; for while we who are visitors must retread in stumbling unfamiliarity the Christmas path, the Moravians of old Salem have always kept straight and clear within their hearts the child road toward the star.

When, a few days before Christmas, I arrived in Salem, people told me I had missed what for Moravians is always the opening

key to the Yuletide season. For unnumbered years there has always been sung on the Sunday before Christmas the anthem of *The Morning Star*, written in the later seventeenth century, and set to music in the nineteenth. Although I never heard choir and congregation unite in its mighty joy, I seemed, during my two weeks' visit, always to be catching its echoes, as if the strains of Christmas minstrels had come floating back to me where, unseen in the distance, they had passed on before, along the silver lit highway, so that the words and the music of *The Morning Star* voice for me the innermost spirit of a Moravian Christmas.

The anthem has both the quaintness of old Germany and the vigorous confidence of the new world, so that the old words and the new are equally expressive of the unchanging faith of present-day Salem, while the music vibrates with the sheer child-gladness of its praise:

Morgenstern auf Finster Nacht
Der die Welt voll Freude macht,
Jesulein, O kommherein,
Leucht in meines Hertzens Schrein.

When, in stanza two, music and words swell out into grandeur, it is as if, out of the black forest mystery of life, some hidden joyous congregation suddenly pealed forth a psalm to the mounting Christmas dawn:

Morning star, thy glory bright
Far exceeds the sun's clear light;
Jesus be, constantly,
More than thousand suns to me.

For the holiday guest there slowly emerges upon that glamourous woodland roadway of his child memories a silver lighted city, gradually shaping into the everyday reality of actual Salem. As I look out from the window of the little gray cottage that harbours me, there become sharply etched against the mistiness of dreams the tall water oaks of the old red brick Square, the domes of boxwood against old walls of buff stucco or of brick, the stretching flat white rows of gravestones holly trimmed, the white belfry of the Home Church, where in Christmas week I heard little boys, high up there in the soft December sunshine, sound the trombone announcement of death. So unobtrusive and yet

so sweet were those strains out of the sky, so blent with the Christmas air, that I listened to them for some time supposing them merely carol-singing floating out from some home where the family had regathered for Christmas.

On one side the little cottage looks forth on the sunny graveyard where Moravians keep their dead too close to life for any sadness, and on the other side it nestles to the prouder, taller buildings of the Square, laid out in the seventeen-sixties by founders who established Salem as the central city of their Wachovian grant of seventy thousand acres, to be built and to be kept a city meet for their faith. The solid eighteenth century houses still remain, skilfully adapted to modern usage, or unobtrusively altered. Half of Salem traces its ancestry back to those earlier days, and all of Salem keeps alive, both in family life and in public, the traditions and the customs of its unforgotten builders.

Perhaps it is only in our own South that so gentle and half romantic a faith could have found so gracious a flowering as is typified in the Easter and the Christmas customs of this Salem of North Carolina. There is a blending of native warmth and glow and kindliness in the spirit of this Southern Province of the Moravian Church. The first colonists came seeking a mild climate and friendly neighbours, and found both. For a hundred and fifty years Salem has been true to its first purpose. Long ago it was a little refuge city of peace in the wilderness, and still today it offers its benediction for all who seek to penetrate beyond the mere externals of a locality into the inner sanctities of tradition. Long ago a brave little band kept to their secure daily round of work and worship, amid perils of Indian attack and the backwash of Continental armies, and freely gave their hospitality to everyone that asked it; and today the mind of those first settlers still dominates and moulds the life of the city. Yesterday and now the people of Salem have possessed both the art of shrewd adjustment to the contemporary and the power to withdraw from all its fever and conflict into the peace of a child faith. With quaint literalness those early founders looked upon themselves as all members of one family, and today one of the strongest impressions of any visitor is that of a great household,

close bound in sympathy, and all turning toward the old Home Church as to a central hearthside, while up and down the worn old streets there moves the form of one still young at eighty, who in himself is host and shepherd and father of all the city.

One wonders if the inhabitants of Salem fully realize their high privilege of living in a community which both expresses their religion and preserves the finest traditions of their ancestors. In these bewildering days it is the lot of most idealists to live in a solitude, unable, amid the surrounding mists, to distinguish the shapes of their fellow believers. But in Salem people have the sacred advantage of dwelling with those who constantly share and reinforce each other's faith as naturally as they have shared each other's childhood and each other's memories of the old Infant School. Probably Moravians do not dream with what strange nostalgia a visitor listens to persons who treat God conversationally, who talk of Him as spontaneously as a little boy speaks of that splendid comrade he calls Daddy. Normally enough, naturally enough, has the Moravian spirit been able to strike deep roots in our own South, for there religion is still a custom unquestioned, and leisure can still be found for an obsolete, Old World culture, and intellect still bows in reverence before the soul. In old Salem of the old South there can be no blur upon the radiant confidence of the Christmas story, no smirch upon the silver purity of that far lit path toward Bethlehem's cave.

In Salem I feel myself to be sometimes in Cranford, sometimes in Barchester, while all reminiscence of those two familiar home towns of the fancy is touched by an atmosphere sacred to Salem. From one window of my room I can gaze up the long, silent avenue, forbidden to all vehicles, that skirts the high ivy hung picket fence of the graveyard. Even in December the graveyard grass is vivid in the sunshine. I am so near that I can almost see the crimson berries of the holly wreaths laid on the little flat marble slabs. Cedar Avenue lies, a white path at the heart of Salem. On one side of it are gateways whose sunny arches, blazoned with texts of hope, stand bright against the mystery of shadowy spruce and cedar massed beyond the triumphant little gravestones, marching forever onward in steadfast Christmas faith. Along Cedar Avenue I have watched a funeral pro-

cession move with confident tread, while the trombone strains floated forth delicate and clear upon the New Year's morning.

Another window of my room looks toward the old Square, toward the Bishop's home beside the Bishop's church, toward the aging buildings that still bear names witnessing to the deep Moravian reverence for the family as a holy entity—the Sisters' House, the House of the Single Brethren, the Widows' House.

A simple vital reverence for tradition is as characteristic of each individual home as it is of the larger home life of the church congregation. In the tiny cottage that offers me hospitality there is a little wooden rocking chair carefully treasured. One turns it up to find on the bottom in a handwriting too alive ever to be forgotten these words, "This rocker was used by mother to rock all her nine babies to sleep from 1828–1844. Keep it in the family." There lies on this little chair a touch of that personal immortality that the home-going dead must value; and yet it is only a little wooden rocker, tawny drab, and finely lined like an old parchment, or an old face. It has no arms, therefore had no bumps for little heads. It has spreading legs and rockers, and on each rocker is painted a bunch of fading wild roses. All the little home is gentle with old memories. Each morning at the close of breakfast I listen first to the daily reading from the Moravian Textbook for the year, the custom of the Textbook dating back to Count Zinzendorf; and after the Textbook comes the reading from birthday and memory books. As I listen, a kindly past made up of small family events becomes vital for me, the guest. Yet the little cottage is alive to the present as well as to the past. The neighbour children blow in and out, all ruddy with ball playing. The Moravian is a children's church, its services crowded with jolly youngsters, seated as happily beside their parents as seedlings grow around a tree. To Moravian children the story of a children's Friend is no dead tale. The rosy seven-year old Harold who comes flying so often to our door has a hearty affection for Santa Claus, but with that Other he is even more familiar. A few weeks before this last Christmas a little playmate died. Harold was puzzled by the sorrow of the grown-ups and protested, "But Louise has gone to Jesus, and she will be there for His birthday."

The star faith of Salem is today no dying creed, but an imperishable growth in the hearts of young men. One has constantly the sense of a past neither decayed nor decadent, being entrusted to younger hands that are vigourous and willing. One seems to witness the very act of a sacramental transmission, the faith of one great united family being handed down to its sons. In the big house next to our cottage I saw on Christmas Eve the table spread for a family party of thirty-two. There was the cushioned seat for the grandmother at the head, and the high chairs for the smallest grandchildren. Down through the center amid the heaped holly and carnations extended a long green board holding eighty blazing candles, the long frame having been originally made for the Bishop's birthday, and now borrowed in Salem's characteristic neighbourly fashion. But it is not the old time Yuletide glow of the stretching Christmas table that will longest remain in my memory, but the chanted grace I heard later from my window, a grace composed by the English John Cennick nearly two hundred years ago:

> Be present at our table, Lord;
> Be here and everywhere adored,
> From Thy all-bounteous hand our food
> May we receive with gratitude.
>
> We humbly thank Thee, Lord, our God,
> For all thy gifts on us bestowed;
> And pray Thee graciously to grant,
> The food which day by day we want.

More impressive than the rich harmony of men's voices ringing out upon the starlit evening was their utter reverence; and these, it must be emphasized, are the voices of young men, young bankers, young merchants and lawyers of that Twin City which is made up of two united towns, one new, one old, named on the maps Winston-Salem. These are the torchbearers whose first memory of their faith is as toddlers brought to the Children's Christmas Eve Love Feast. There are the young fathers who now bring their own toddlers to hear the Bishop tell once again to children, as for forty-five years he has been telling it, the child story of a star.

There are persons who walk the Christmas lighted path through earth's black mystery not on one day of the year only, but on all the days of all the years. The Magi were subtle students, keen men and free minded, rich with the long inherited treasures of the intellect. It was their science, not their superstition, that revealed to them the birth of a new light in the heavens. Bishop Rondthaler's eyes are a seer's eyes, clear blue lanterns at eighty. His face is of the type transmitted only through long generations of the finely educated. There is not a child in Salem who does not know Bishop Rondthaler's smile, Bishop Rondthaler's voice. How many times he must have sung that old glad anthem, which each year on its appointed Sunday rings out upon the Christmas road of Salem:

> Morning Star, my soul's true light,
> Tarry not, dispel my night;
> Jesus mine, in me shine,
> Fill my heart with light divine.

The Children's Love Feast of Christmas Eve is a custom as old as Salem, and older. More than a hundred and fifty years ago, when Wachovia was still a forest wilderness dark with perils of wolves and bears and hostile Indians, the Moravian Brethren of the little settlements of Bethabara and Bethania welcomed to the children's love feasts not only their own children, but those of their neighbours. The old records come down to us all bright and warm with Christmas hospitality. In the diary of the Bethabara congregation of December, 1760, one reads:

> On the 5th it was reported that the Indians were killing again on the Catawba. Br. Ettwein had a talk with a Tuscarora. On Christmas Day the English children from the mill came to see our Christmas decoration, they were so poorly clad that it would have moved a stone to pity. We told them why we rejoiced like children and gave to each a piece of cake. In Bethania Br. Ettwein held a Love Feast for the 24 children there, at the close of the service each received a pretty Christmas verse and a ginger cake, the first they had ever seen.

In 1761, one first reads of the giving of lighted tapers, that custom never yet broken. In the account written December 24, 1770, one can still hear those far off carols, still see the twinkle of candles held high by youngsters dancing homeward along the

dark woodpaths: "At 6 P.M. a Love Feast was held for the children, appropriate hymns were sung, and small lighted candles were distributed, which they joyfully carried home, still burning."

As those first settler children must have come all eager to those long ago celebrations of their Moravian neighbours, so today the Christmas Eve crowd is composed as much of non-Moravians as of church members, all flocking to the old Home Church of their city. For half an hour before the doors could be opened, while the sunshine of the late afternoon poured over us, I waited with a happy throng, fathers and mothers and grandparents, and youngsters of every age from one year to twelve. As soon as the doors admitted us, the wide arc of each pew was instantly filled, but the little low heads were not all visible except as they popped up to peer around, little brown or blond heads, bobbed or meticulously curled. The church hummed with little voices. Now and then a baby protested sharply against being repressed by some solicitous mother, but for the most part all the noise was happy. The long window which showed children crowding to Jesus's welcome was still clear in the afternoon light, which as the service proceeded dimmed to shadowy evening. All the Christmas decoration focussed the eye upon the picture above the choir platform which extends across the front of the church. In a deep green frame of shining laurel and spruce there shines out each year the same ruddy illumination of Correggio's Nativity. On each Christmas Eve every child in the congregation looks up to see, all bathed in glowing light, a mother bending over the Christ Baby in his stable.

As if it had been quaint home incense, the aroma of the love feast coffee is fragrant through the church. There is rustling, there is chatter of children, and yet also there is the restraint of a great reverence. Then a hush, and everyone is listening. Somewhere high and far away there is music, silvery announcement from the sky. Grown-up hands touch the little ones to quiet, that all may hear. It is the trombone players in the belfry, but how easily it might have been the herald angels! Soft at first, then in growing volume, the organ takes up and continues those strains from overhead. The service moves on all musically, old carols, jubilant anthems, but because it is a

children's service in a children's church it is brief and simple. It is not long before the two doors at the right beneath the gallery swing open, and a reverent procession of women all in white enters, bearing the baskets of love feast buns. There follows a line of men carrying great wooden trays of the straight white mugs of love feast coffee. Quietly as in some happy sacrament, each child is given his bun and mug. Seated in front, close to them, sharing their love feast meal, the Bishop looks forth on his children. Gently his voice breaks upon the rustling, and the subdued chatter of little lips: "Fathers and mothers who at this moment are guiding a child's hand, as he eats his love feast, one too young to know what he is doing, pray each one of you that at this instant Jesus Himself may come and be near your little child with His Christmas blessing."

When the bun is eaten, the coffee drunk, and the mugs collected and taken away by the silent procession, the Bishop rises. The church is growing dark with the stealing shadows of twilight. Never has the Bishop's telling of the old story been twice the same. To him it is forever new. He speaks on the brief text, "Yet for our sakes He became poor." The babbling of little tongues grows still. Young eyes grow wide, looking into the Bishop's. In words instinctively pictorial he tells us there was once in Heaven a marvellous house, golden and splendid, where Jesus lived with His Father, surrounded by love and tenderness and beauty beyond any telling. Outside of this house were stately trees, and lovely flowers, and darting birds of rainbow colors. All about Jesus in His house were angels more than you could count, and these angels asked only one thing, to serve Him. To wait on Jesus was the sole wish of all these regiments of angels in this beautiful house in Heaven. Yet all this love and all this royal splendour Jesus left, that He might come a little baby, too poor to have a cradle, a baby born in a stable, laid to sleep among the cattle. He came to us, all poor, to see whether we would love Him for Himself alone, without any riches of money or of power. And still today, as He lies there, a little baby in a stable, He is asking, "Children, will you love me for myself alone?" And if we do love Him for Himself alone, pleads the Bishop's voice, remembering how He loved us enough to leave His splendid

home to come to us, if we love Him and try, each child of us here in this church today, to please Him, then some day He will take us home, to live with Him in His beautiful house in Heaven, forever.

Gently the twilight wraps us in darkness, more carols ring through the old church, then on each side of the organ in front of us, a door opens and two women in white appear, the van of a procession which moves down the platform steps and through the aisles. Each woman carries a lighted candle, and each pair is followed by a man bearing a great tray of blazing tapers. The women distribute the candles, one to every child in the congregation. The giving of the candles closes the service. Theirs is the only light in the darkness as we rise for the Bishop's blessing, and then afterward pour out beneath the old hooded doorway into the starlit Christmas Eve. Looking back one sees still faintly discernible the figures in that high window which against the outdoor darkness and mystery reveals Jesus blessing little children.

The Moravian is a children's church by no accident, but by long conviction, as the Bishop himself once explained to me. When, in the early eighteenth century, the ancient Unitas Fratrum of Bohemia experienced its great revival at Herrnhut under the protection of young Count Zinzendorf, there suddenly occurred—as it appears, quite spontaneously—a great wave of religious enthusiasm among the children. The quaint touching account comes down to us in the words of ten-year-old diarists. Ever since that time, says the Bishop, "Our reverence for childhood has been founded on the belief that a child can be as good a Christian as a grown-up—and perhaps a little better." In Salem the children's Christmas Eve Love Feast, and the Children's Memorabilia Service at New Year's, are made fully as important as the corresponding celebrations for adults. Just as, in the afternoon, the children come to receive their Christmas candles, so, a few hours later, the grown-ups gather in their turn, for their reverent Christmas love feast.

Except for its deeper solemnity, the evening love feast is a repetition of that of the afternoon. The crowded church is a body of men and women assembled once more to gaze with the

Bishop at that shining picture of the Nativity. Again there floats down upon the hushed congregation the faint, silver music from the belfry, sacred minstrelsy sounding out of the darkness to be taken up by the confident organ. As the congregation rises, the whole building resounds with the joy of the anthem, and when this dies away, the Bishop's quiet voice asks us to continue standing while he reads Luke's account of that long ago night in Bethlehem. There in the old Home Church of old Salem, the story of the first Christmas becomes instinct with a mystical reality. Later in the service, which, like all the ritual of the Moravian church, consists far more of praise than of prayer, the Bishop speaks to us of that undying narrative, and as his steadfast belief leads us, children following his eighty-year-old guidance, back to that holy birthplace of his faith, it is as if we trod once again a silver pathway bright against all gloom, all doubt, while sturdy shepherds and glistening angels come thrusting aside the darkness to companion us along the road to Bethlehem.

The Bishop reminds us that a great literary critic once pronounced Luke's Gospel the most beautiful book in the world. Of this book the second chapter is the most beautiful of all. Thoughtful readers of it must remember always that Luke was a Greek doctor, highly educated, scientific in dealing with his sources. He was Paul's physician, and Paul was after his conversion the familiar friend of the apostles in Jerusalem, undoubtedly the friend of John at whose home Mary lived. We may well believe, therefore, that the story of Christ's birth, as we have it in Luke's Gospel, is His mother's story, coming down to us how near, how quick and alive! Between us and Mary's own voice telling it only two people, Paul who transmitted the account, Luke who wrote it down! The Bishop points out how tender and how holy is the chronicle with details only Jesus's mother could have known. As the most sacred thing in our physical life is the relation of a human mother to her human child, so it is most fitting that the story of the birth of a divine Child should be a record from a mother's lips of mother love.

Beneath the illumined scene of that Nativity which focuses forever all Christmas worship on the holiness of a family group,

we eat the Christmas love feast that symbolises by our sharing of food and drink together our close knit membership in one great family. In utter quiet, in utter reverence, the procession of white clad girls and women moves slowly down the aisles distributing to every one present the love feast buns. According to custom, each one of us wraps our bun in a tiny napkin brought for the purpose. On one corner of the napkin is embroidered a cross. Then at the entrance of the men with the great laden trays, the high white mugs of coffee are passed from hand to hand along the wide-curving pews. The solemn hush is gently broken by the Bishop's words pointing out our unconscious courtesy, courtesy which is like Christ's own, he believes, and which cements for this holy hour the intimacy of our kinship. He asks us, while we wait, to sing, "Blest be the tie that binds—" According to old custom the Bishop has been the first served, seated by the communion table, close to his people, as always, and wearing, as always, merely the ordinary dress of his fellow worshippers. When every one has been served, then the Bishop and congregation together eat the love feast bun, drink the love feast coffee, while the organ peals forth its Christmas joy.

Musically the service passes on to the candle-giving. All the church is darkened. As in the afternoon, to right and left of the organ in front of us, doors open, and two by two the white-dressed women, holding each her burning candle, and the men carrying the long trays that blaze with light, enter and pass down all aisles and through the curving gallery. Beginning with the Bishop, they give to everyone in the church a lighted taper, slim, green, girdled with its frill of crimson paper. Briefly the Bishop explains the meaning of the Moravian Christmas candles. "As Jesus came that He might be a shining light for us in a black world, so let each of us bear a light for Him."

When everyone has received a candle the procession moves back up the converging aisles, remounts the steps of the platform, but does not pass out. All the middle space in front of the organ is a screen of spruce and holly and dark glistening laurel, from the centre of which the Nativity scene glows just above the Bishop's head, as he stands facing us, his figure discernible only by the light of the taper in his hand. In front of the choir doors,

to right and left, are grouped the women all in white except for a sprig of holly on the breast. Behind them stand the men on whose trays is still left a mass of blazing candles rosy-trimmed. In the gallery and in the body of the church, people have become invisible in the dark, but the curve of every pew above and below is outlined by a shining row of tapers against the blackness. All in silence we have risen. The Bishop speaks, "Let each of us at this instant lift high his candle, so that Jesus from heaven may look down and see the shining of our light for Him." Then as we stand, each holding high his tiny gleaming taper, the Bishop's voice, melodious from out the engulfing shadows, leads us all as we sing, "Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow."

As we leave the church, the moonlight is pouring down on the old roofs, the old streets. Cedar Avenue lies like a shaft of silver beyond the church door. Shadows of bare trees are etched black on the worn pavements. Moonlight glistens on the ivy walls, on the long leaves of the magnolia trees, on the towering domes of boxwood. Little streets and old alleys opening on the Square are black tunnels of mystery. The tracery of the water oaks is delicately clear against a sky flooded with silver. Salem lies as still beneath the Christmas moon as if it were a city in some old world legend. In the hush there goes still ringing sweet within one's mind the music of ancient trumpets from the sky, the melody of a clear voice, reading a mystical story. Today's rushing progress seems as far away as the clangour of the trolley on the next street. If on one long ago December night some Roman traveler, posting from city to city on a tour through ancient Palestine, had stopped, puzzled, to investigate a strange light coming from a stable cave on the outskirts of a little hill town, and if, as he approached that light, the sky above his head had suddenly been riven by angels singing of a new born god, how afterward when he went back to that bustling, imperial centre of the world would he have related that portentous incident of his journeyings? In what words comprehensible to that proud, fevered Rome of Augustus Cæsar could a Roman traveler have translated his impressions of a far away little village, made holy by faith, a far away little village lying in peace beneath a silver flooded Christmas sky? Would

such a traveler, as the crowded, noisy years went on, cease trying to explain to anyone that strange vision, even while in his heart the picture of that midnight village grew always more vivid, more arresting?

To one traveler turned aside last Christmas time from the clamourous streets of today, to walk for a little while the Christmas road through old Salem, the memory of the Christmas city grows ever more significant, more challenging. The glory of imperial Rome has faded into darkness, but does the road to Bethlehem still lie silver clear, beckoning to wise men? As long as little children shall be born, shall there be reborn each Christmas the faith in a God who became a baby? Ringing through midnight streets, echoed among the black overshadowing branches of mystery, shall there sound forever, as always at Christmas time in old Salem, the praise of a great light?

Thy glad beams, Thou morning Star,
Cheer the nations near and far;
Thee we own, Lord alone,
Man's great Saviour, God's dear Son.

WINIFRED KIRKLAND.

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